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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

Culturally disadvantaged low-achieving elementary school pupils were tutored by 10th and 11th grade students from academic and vocational high schools. The purpose was to help these fourth and fifth graders increase their school achievement, especially reading ability. Two groups were used, a control and an experimental group; one group met once a week, the other twice a week.

The first hour was spent with each pupil working at a given skills station; as he improved he could move on to the next station. The second hour was spent with the tutor on regular homework.

The hypotheses were that the pupils and tutors in the experimental group would improve in reading more than the control group, that reading improvement would be directly related to the intensity of tutorial service, that pupils working in "skills stations" would show greater improvement than pupils working only on homework, that the attitudes of the experimental and control groups will differ on school, aspiration, and social value, and that there will be no relationship between the intellectual and personality characteristics of tutors and their tutorial effectiveness.

Evaluations of these hypotheses were still in process when the report was written.

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Mobilization for Youth

HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF PUPIL READING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE HOMEWORK HELPER PROGRAM

The Homework Helper Action Program featured the employment of high-achieving high school students as tutors for culturally disadvantaged, low-achieving elementary school pupils. The high school students were trained by supervising teachers and paid to tutor fourth and fifth grade pupils in after-school Homework Helper Centers. The purpose of the tutoring service was to help and encourage elementary school pupils toward increased school achievement. While some attention was given to homework related activities in all school subjects, the primary focus of the Program was upon the improvement of the pupil's reading ability.

The 240 tutors elected to the program were drawn from the 10th and 11th grades of academic and vocational high schools in or near the Mobilization area. The ethnic distribution of tutors was 17.3% Hispanic, 18.2% Negro, 1.4% oriental, and 63.1% white and others.

Tutoring service was rendered to 570 pupils drawn from the population of 2500 fourth-and-fifth-grade pupils who were reading below grade level at the time tested by the schools. The ethnic distribution of pupils elected to the Program was 58.1% Hispanic, 28.8% Negro, 2.6% oriental, and 10.5% white and others.

In specific sentence tutorial activities were organized so as to permit the examination of two treatment variables. The first of these concerned the scheduling of pupils for the tutorial sessions. In particular centers half the pupils were scheduled to attend two days a week, and the other half scheduled only one day a week, thereby creating a population

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for whom intensity of treatment was systematically varied. Also in one other center special reading stations were organized at which particular phonic and word attack skill activities were to be conducted. Each tutor was trained to supervise the activities at a particular station. For one hour of each session, the pupil worked at a given station in keeping with his diagnosed word attack skill deficiencies. As a pupil demonstrated improvement in a skill, he was directed to another station to work on another skill. During the second hour, pupils worked with their assigned tutors on regular homework and reading activities. It was the intension of the Action Program to provide a contrast between the "Skills stations" approach to tutorial reading instruction as one treatment modality with the regular Homework Helper activities carried on in the other Centers as a second treatment modality.

Since the Action Program focused primarily on the improvement of pupil reading skills, the evaluation of the program was concerned with assessing changes in the reading achievement of pupils and of their teachers. Also we were interested in determining what affects the program and the pupil-tutor-relationship might have had upon the tutors and their pupils with respect to their attitudes toward school, their educational and vocational aspirations, and their social values. Finally, we were interested in identifying those intellectual and personality characteristics, which tended to predict successful service as a tutor.

Consequently, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Pupils and tutors in the program will show greater improvement on reading measures than will control subjects.

2. The reading improvements of experimental pupils will be directly related to the intensity of tutorial service.

3. Pupils given the "skill-station" treatment will show greater improvement on reading measures than will pupils given the regular homework helper treatment.

4. There will be significant differences between experimental and control subjects with respect to attitudes toward school, educational and vocational aspirations, and social value.

5. There will be no relationship between the intellectual and personality characteristics of tutors and their tutorial effectiveness.

To test these hypotheses a study of the homework helper program was conducted between November 4, 1963 and June 5, 1964. The study was designed as a classical experiment with randomly selected experimental and control groups, both for tutors and for pupils. The major portion of the pupil sample consisted of 215 pupils assigned in one day per week treatment situations and 95 control pupils who were not given service. However, to investigate the effects of treatment intensity, an additional sample of 140 pupils and a control group of 60 pupils were randomly drawn. Half of the experimental subjects were assigned to centers two days per week and the other half were given one day per week assignments. Similarly to investigate the

effects of treatment modality, 99 experimental and 45 control subjects were divided into three groups of 33 pupils and assigned to the two-day "skill-stations" treatment, the two-day regular homework helper treatment, and the one-day regular homework helper treatment. This somewhat complicated sampling pattern yielded a total sample of 454 experimental subjects and 195 control subjects.

The tutor samples consisted of 150 experimental subjects and 70 control subjects randomly drawn from the population of eligible applicants.

Pre and post-study data for the experiment was gathered through the administration of attitude questionnaires to experimental control subjects, and through the survey of school records. The Iowa Silent Reading Test-Advanced Form, was used to assess tutor reading improvement. The New York growth in Reading Tests, Level C, was used to measure pupil-reading achievement.

All of the data for the experiment have been collected and will be subjected to statistical analysis in the coming months. A preliminary examination of pupil reading achievement leads us to believe that reading improvement was closely related to treatment intensity. Pupils under the two-day treatment intensity showed a mean improvement of 5.8 months, whereas the controls showed a mean improvement of 3.8 months. The difference between these means appears to be significant at the .05 level. Pupils under the 1-day treatment with a mean growth of 4.9 months did not differ significantly from controls.

However, these results must be viewed as tentative until such time as we have had an opportunity to examine carefully the data for contaminating factors. A final report of the findings in this study will be available in January 1965